



# **THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE**

*Everett McCorvey,  
Founder & Music Director*

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Tuesday, February 4, 7:30 p.m.  
Bean-Brown Theatre



*Co-Sponsored by  
MLK JR. Realizing the Dream Committee*

# THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

*Everett McCorvey, Founder & Music Director*

Walk Together Children

arr. W. Henry Smith

Fix Me Jesus

arr. Hall Johnson

Lisa Hornung and Ricky Little, soloists  
Peggy Stamps, dancer

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel

Traditional

Is There Anybody Here?

Arr. Roland Carter

Albert R. Lee, tenor

It's Me O Lord

Traditional

Claritha Buggs Jacobs, mezzo-soprano

Ride On King Jesus

Hall Johnson

Ricky Little, baritone

Come Down Angels

Undine Smith Moore

Angela Brown, soprano

My Lord, What a Mourning

Sam Batt Owens

I Want To Be Ready

Arr. James Miller

Hope Koehler, soprano  
Peggy Stamps, dancer

You Must Have That True Religion

arr. Roland Carter

Angela Brown and Amira Hocker, soloists

My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord

Traditional

Alfonse Anderson, tenor

Ride up in the Chariot

Arr. Joseph Joubert

Andrea Jones, soprano  
Angela Brown, soprano

Rock a My Soul

arr. Howard Roberts

Claritha Buggs Jacobs, soloist  
Peggy Stamps, dancer

Amen

arr. Robert De Cormier

Everett McCorvey, soloist

**INTERMISSION**

Down To the River To Pray (from <i>O Brother Where Art Thou</i> )		Alison Krauss
The Crossing (from <i>Big River</i> )	Amira Hocker, soloist Peggy Stamps dancer	Linda Twine
Muddy Water	Ricky Little and Phumzile Sojola, soloists	
The Lily of the Valley		Arr. Wendell Whalum
Daniel the Servant of the Lord	Alfonse Anderson and Ben Smolder, soloists	Undine Smith Moore
Death is Gonna Lay His Cold Icy Hands on Me	Ricky Little, soloist	Arr. Andre Thomas
I Thank You Jesus		Arr. Robert L. Morris
Done Found My Lost Sheep	Claritha Buggs Jacobs, mezzo soprano	J. Rosamond Johnson
Go Down Moses	Earl Hazel, bass	Arr. J Rosamond Johnson
Lord I Have Seen	Andrea Jones, soprano	John Cooper
I Don't Feel No Ways Tired	Keith Dean, baritone	Traditional
Watch and Pray	Angela Brown, soprano	Undine Smith Moore
Come On Children Let's Sing		Linda Twine
Ole Time Religion		McCutchen/McCorvey
He Never Failed Me Yet	Claritha Buggs Jacobs, soloist	Robert Ray

*\*Program subject to change*

*\*Dancer at selected performances only*

The American Spiritual Ensemble is represented in the United States by  
The Alkahest Agency, 1681 Council Bluff Dr., Northside Station / Atlanta, GA 30345  
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VISIT THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE WEBSITE AT:  
www.americanspiritualensemble.com

## NOTES ON THIS PERFORMANCE

Less we forget the horrible trips to America of Black Africans on the crowded slave ships and forget a people being forcibly brought to an unknown land, bound in chains, suffering and dying. We know today that these slave ships contained a panorama of Black music, including the spirituals. This Black music was being transported to a new land in the form of shouts, hollers, cries, and rhythms. Traveling under such horrible conditions, the African's native songs served as a way to endure the pain and as a source of inspiration. These tunes have been proven by the test of time to not only be the songs of hope, but an art form that has survived throughout the ages to become an indigenous American music. We must celebrate this Black music and help all people of all ages to understand its meaning and rightful place in our culture. Moreover, we must pass it on to future generations because it is difficult to understand the lives of early Black America without including their songs.

Exactly where or when did these rhythmic, inspirational songs called spirituals originate? There is little documentation of the exact date when the term "spiritual" was first used in print to refer to the religious songs of the Black people. Once in America, the cries, calls and hollers and shouts were continued as these people were abused, mistreated and held as slaves. These songs were often used in the fields while working, in worship service and as a search for freedom. The spirituals enabled the Blacks to retain some of their African identity while living in the midst of trials and tribulations. Even though the texts of spirituals include many Biblical terms, these songs are not just for religious purposes. The subjects could be religious or secular.

We have often heard how spirituals were used as songs to inform the slaves of deliverance. Slaves were forced to use words and actions contrary to the message of the songs for fear of retaliation by slave owners. Spirituals functioned as a source of emotional endurance and comfort and as a communication tool for escape to freedom.

In the mid 1800's, the Fisk Jubilee Singers,

of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, toured the world and included spirituals in their concert repertoire. The fact that they included the spirituals in their repertoire salvaged and preserved an important part of our Black musical heritage. Soon afterwards, colleges such as Hampton Institute of Hampton, Virginia and Tuskegee Institute of Tuskegee, Alabama and other Black colleges sent their choirs on tours. The performances on these tours contributed to acceptance and respectability of the spirituals. Today, the American Spiritual Ensemble stands out as an exceptional group of talented and trained singers very capable of continuing this legacy of Black songs. This prodigious group, which was founded by Everett McCorvey in 1995, has performed in theaters and opera houses around the world. Each member is a soloist in his or her own right and has thrilled audiences around the world. Their mission is to keep the American Negro spiritual alive. These spirituals continue to serve in our society as a source of inspiration, courage and fortitude. The American Spiritual Ensemble, encompassing rich, natural, vocal instruments, performs with radiance, vitality and musicianship. As we listen and remember our ancestors, this group of harmonious voices embraces us with its ability to interpret and perform these beloved songs with stylistic understanding and intense expressiveness. The ensemble has presented diverse concerts throughout the United States, Europe and South America and has toured Spain seven times presenting over 80 concerts. These magnificent performers are continuing the legacy by providing the world with this vast wealth of Black historical knowledge through the songs we have come to love and know as "spirituals." We must promote and foster these songs of feelings, everyday life, hopes and fears, fate and freedom and pass this heritage on to future generations to come. Hats off to the powerful and emotional American Spiritual Ensemble and Everett McCorvey for this thrilling multiethnic performance of the Black experience in Black song... the spiritual.

Laura Keith, Professor of Music, Claflin University  
Orangeburg, South Carolina

# THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

The American Spiritual Ensemble was founded by Everett McCorvey in 1995. Its members have sung in theaters and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and abroad in Italy, Germany, Britain, Scotland, Spain and Japan. The repertoire ranges from opera to spirituals to Broadway. The members of the American Spiritual Ensemble are soloists in their own right and the vocalists have thrilled audiences around the world with their dynamic renditions of classic spirituals, jazz and Broadway numbers highlighting the Black experience.

The mission of the American Spiritual Ensemble is to keep the American Negro spiritual alive. The repertoire of the American Spiritual Ensemble ranges from spirituals to classical to Broadway and dance. The American Spiritual Ensemble has presented diverse concerts throughout the United States, Europe and South America and has toured Spain seven times presenting over 80 concerts. Its founder, Everett McCorvey, is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. He received his degrees from the University of Alabama, including a Doctorate of Musical Arts. As a tenor soloist, Dr. McCorvey has performed in many places including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Radio City Music Hall in New York and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics. During the summers, Dr. McCorvey is on the artist faculty of the American Institute of Musical Study (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. Dr. McCorvey holds an Alumni Professorship in Voice and is Director of Opera at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY.

## MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

### ALFONSE ANDERSON, TENOR

Tenor/Alfonse Anderson, Assistant Professor of Voice and Coordinator of Vocal Studies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music from Texas Southern University and a D.M.A. in voice from the University of Arizona. He performed recently with Opera Columbus, the Grant Park Festival in Chicago, and in concerts with Illinois State University and with Opera North in Philadelphia.

### ANGELA BROWN, SOPRANO

Soprano Angela Brown performed this season with the Indianapolis Opera, San Antonio Symphony, Teatro La Fenice, and Opera Company of Philadelphia. In Gibraltar she won the Audience Award and shared first prize at the Altamura/Enrico Caruso International Voice Competition. Performances in 2003 include *Amelia (Un Ballo in Maschera)* with San Francisco Opera and *Elizabeth (Don Carlos)* with Opera Company of Philadelphia. Solo appearances include: Teatro La Fenice, Carnegie Hall, Michigan Opera Theatre, Indianapolis Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, Brevard Festival Orchestra, Roanoke Symphony, Knoxville Symphony, and the Kennedy Center's 25th Anniversary Celebration. She will sing the title role of the *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera next season.

### KEITH DEAN, BASS BARITONE

Bass Baritone/Keith Deans, Hardinsburg, Kentucky, is pursuing a degree from the University of Kentucky, and his operatic roles include Blitch in *Susanna*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* by Mozart, Germont in *La Traviata* by Verdi, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* by Strauss and Pa Moss in *The Tender Land* by Copland. His operatic debut was with Opera Theatre of St. Louis in Treemonisha.

### EARL HAZELL JR., BASS

Earl Hazell Jr., a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, has performed with the New York Philharmonic including the Beethoven *Ninth Symphony* under Zubin Mehta, and the Beethoven *Choral Fantasy* with Alfred Brendel in the 100th Anniversary of Carnegie Hall under James Levine. He has performed solo as Sarastro and the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* in the Leiderkranz Society of New York, and in several roles in *Porgy and Bess*, in London, Berlin, Cologne, Amsterdam and Teatro Dell'Opera in Rome.

### AMIRA HOCKER, SOPRANO

Soprano/Amira Hocker is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and has performed in the United States and Europe. During the summer of 1999, she performed in the chorus for *La Bohème* and *Faust* with the Cincinnati Opera. She was recently named a finalist in the Savannah On-Stage competition scheduled for March.

### LISA HORNUNG, MEZZO SOPRANO

Mezzo/Lisa Hornung, University of Saskatchewan, Canada, studied at the International Institute of Vocal Arts in Italy. She has appeared as a guest soloist with several orchestral groups and recently has sung Mozart's *Requiem*, Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Magnificat*. She is scheduled to perform Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra.

### CLARITHA BUGGS JACOBS, MEZZO SOPRANO

Mezzo Soprano/Claritha Buggs, University of Michigan, made her professional operatic debut in 1983 with the

Michigan Opera Theatre as Seibel in Gounod's *Faust*. She has performed with Light Opera of Michigan, Dayton Opera, Detroit Symphony, Santa Barbara Symphony, Kalamazoo Symphony, Terre Haute Symphony, Dearborn Symphony and the Lexington Philharmonic.

**ANDREA JONES, SOPRANO**

Soprano/Andrea Jones received her undergraduate degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and a master's degree from the University of Kentucky. She also received an Artist Diploma at Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and currently serves as a visiting faculty member at Lincoln University. Recently, Jones was the district winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

**HOPE KOEHLER, SOPRANO**

Soprano/Hope Koehler has appeared with many opera companies such as Nashville Opera, Tennessee Opera Theatre, Blair Opera Theatre, MTSU Opera Theatre, Lexington Opera Society, and the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. She is a graduate of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, and holds a master's degree from the University of Alabama. She completes a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at the University of Kentucky in May.

**ALBERT RUDOLPH LEE, TENOR**

Tenor/Albert Rudolph Lee, a graduate of the University of Connecticut and The Juilliard School, performed the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, two supporting roles in Chandler Carter's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, and was a soloist in the University of Connecticut's Memorial Concert of the Mozart Requiem, given as a tribute to the victims of the 9/11 tragedy. A national finalist in the Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition, regional winner of the National Association of Negro Musicians Voice Competition and winner of the Friday Woodmere Music Clubs Young Artist Competition, Lee's upcoming engagements include the Boston Lyric Opera's tour of Rossini's *Barber of Seville*.

**RICKY LITTLE, BASS**

Bass/Ricky Little received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, and continued his education at Ohio State University, earning a Master of Arts degree in vocal pedagogy and Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal Performance. Dr. Little completed studies in opera at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. He is Associate Professor of Voice at Morehead State University in Kentucky and the assistant conductor of The American Spiritual Ensemble.

**TEDRIN BLAIR LINDSAY, PIANIST**

Pianist and musicologist Tedrin Blair Lindsay was raised in Rome, Italy, and has been a professional accompanist since the age of ten. He performs dozens of recitals annually, boasting a huge repertoire of vocal and instrumental chamber works, with specialties in 20th century French and

American music. He is a staff musical director for the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre and pianist for the UK School of Music. His productions include Copland's *The Tender Land*, Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

**ALICIA HELM MCCORVEY, MEZZO SOPRANO**

Mezzo Soprano/Alicia Helm McCorvey graduated from Indiana University (B.S.) and New York University (M.A.) and studied at the Julliard School and Manhattan School of Music. Her performances include *The Mikado*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Così Fan Tutte* and *Evita*. She has performed with the North Carolina Opera, Four Corners Opera, Greater Miami Opera, Aspen Music Festival and the Metropolitan Opera. She was artist-in-residence of the New York State Summer School of the Arts in Saratoga, New York.

**BENJAMIN SMOLDER, BASS**

Bass/Ben Smolder has performed in opera houses throughout Europe. He has performed roles with the Spoleto Festival, Des Moines Opera, and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, including Reverend Hale in Ward's *The Crucible*, Prudenzio in Rossini's *Viaggio a Reims*, Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, Death in Holst's *Savitri*, Collatinus in Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Smolder can be heard on a new CD of Copland's *The Tender Land* with the Bohuslave Martinu Orchestra.

**PHUMZILE SOJOLA, TENOR**

Tenor/Phumzile Sojola, a native of South Africa, is one of the Young American Artists with Glimmerglass Opera in 2002. His roles include the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte*, Robins in *Porgy and Bess* and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*. Future engagements include Verdi's *Aida* with Dayton Opera and performances with the Dayton Symphony in the opening of the Schuster Performance Center. He is in the Artist Diploma program at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

**PEGGY STAMPS, DANCER**

Dancer/Peggy Stamps, Purdue University, has toured with the America Spiritual Ensemble in Spain and the United States and has studied and taught in the areas of modern, jazz and rhythm tap dance. She has held leading roles in productions of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *A Chorus Line*, *Death of Salesman*, and *Fly'in West*. She has choreographed several University of Kentucky Opera Theatre productions including *Die Fledermaus*, *Susannah*, *The Tender Land* and *It's a Grand Night for Singing*. She is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Kentucky, teaching movement for opera singers.